

Name: Nur Aainaa bt Rozliman / Nurul Atikah bt Yusri
Project Name: Buku Jalanan Chow Kit Module
University/College: University Malaya

BUKU JALANAN CHOW KIT MODULE FINAL REPORT

Section A Written Report

Buku Jalanan Chow Kit (BJCK) was born out of belief that every child should have the same equal opportunity of receiving an education no matter what background they came from. Children of Chow Kit, children who are slower at learning, children who could not attend school due to circumstances that they are born into and children who have thirst for knowledge are why this initiative is started. In the back alleys of the city, with KLCC and high cost condominiums well seen in the background and monorails zooming by every 10 minutes or so, adding to the various sounds of the Chow Kit road, we provide free classes, teaching any children that would have us there, English and Mathematics. Under solar charged lamps, from 8pm to 11pm, every Friday and Sunday, we hold our classes at the loading bay of Alka Ria, sitting on the mats spread out literally opposite of a smelly dumpster.

The first class was in the month of August 2015 and after 8 months of getting to know our students at Chow Kit and basically assessing their abilities in English and Maths, we came to the conclusion that in order for our students to catch up with the school's syllabus, we need to have a specialised module that can cater directly and exactly to the Chow Kit children's level of literacy and numeracy.

There is of course an unforeseen difficulty that we faced. One of our committee members that play a vital part in constructing the modules had to go to Germany for the duration that should be spent working on the modules. This did not damper our spirit to still provide a module that could help our Chow Kit children to have a better grasp on the English language and mathematical understanding. Thus, we contacted an organization called MYreaders and offered them a collaboration with us here at BJCK. This is as to pick up the pace and adhere to the schedule planned.

After weeks and weeks of discussing with the literary experts from MYreaders and the experts themselves, coming down to Chow Kit to properly assess our students, a module is therefore designed and tested to bring our children from illiteracy to literacy in 27 weeks. We will implement this module at the start of February this year.

The module of course did not come cheap, but after hours of crunching the numbers, we decided that we should not compromise the quality of our children's education to cut cost. With funding received from Khind Starfish Foundation and the additional crowd funding which also helped put out the name of Buku Jalanan Chow Kit out in the public (which in return invited a steady flow of monthly income), we are able to incur the extra cost.

In long term, we hope that our students would be able to take official examinations even without proper or formal schooling in order for them to have the same chance as everyone else that did have a formal education later on during their adult life. I feel the need to share that, during our proposal presentation, I mentioned a student that could not attend school due to the fact that she has to take care of her little brother is now in fact, an attending student this year. One student of BJCK who took UPSR last year also passed every subject. With the English and Mathematics module in hand for us in 2017, we hope to achieve more with our students.

Time and time again we are reminded and time and time again we voice among each other that what we serve here is the future of the Chow Kit children who are also the future of Malaysia. It is

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our firm belief that the only way out of the cycle of poverty and abuse is education. This year, we witnessed a wave of youth of varying age from as young as 10 to 18 years old arrived in Chow Kit, sleeping on the alley adjacent to the very alley that we hold our classes. The children that have been consistently attending our classes called these kids *budak-budak* punk and stayed away from them. However, after getting to know these teens, they came collectively to Chow Kit but with different reasons. One reason that is shared by majority however was that to escape an abusive home. To date, there are about two to three of these so called punk kids that attended our class. Although their attendance is inconsistent, we however are very grateful as the time they usually spent doing something irresponsible was instead spent learning on how to read and write in English and how to count. We believe that by putting them outside of the negative influence even for a few hours a week would motivate these kids to do better for themselves. With all this in mind, as long as there is a future for the children of Chow Kit, there is a future for this project. Through BJCK, it is our mission to enable students to reach their potential and become responsible and productive adults.

The short term happiness that our beneficiaries may receive from the module constructed for Buku Jalanan Chow Kit children would be the sense of accomplishment. Learning a new word, learning how to pronounce these words with proper pronunciation and even constructing sentences from these words will bring great joy to our children. Every so often these children will come up to us and share their accomplishments for the night. As an example, one of the children will pull on my shirt and shared this, "*Kakak, saya dah tahu tambah! Hari ini enam muka surat saya buat!*". We hope that the short term happiness would manifest into a long term happiness, in a sense that they would be able to see that these modules could be implemented into their daily lives. However, we must say that the feeling of happiness is not felt strictly felt by our beneficiary, me as an activist of Buku Jalanan Chow Kit could say with utmost confidence that the highlights of my week would be in the streets of Chow Kit itself, together with my students. I believe that other BJCK activists also share the same sentiment.

Being in this project has opened my mind more than any other projects that I have joined. I learned about the exclusionary nature of our education system and the need to fix it. We could not rely solely on the government and citizens should start to care for each other more. I have often agreed with the quote "Treat everyone with kindness", however it is a rare occasion that I have exercised the message that the quote is trying to convey. This is most probably due to lack of empathy. After joining BJCK, I understood that every stranger on the streets each have their own stories to tell and their own battle to fight. An unassuming teenager we see prancing around in the mall could be someone that gets abused daily in what other people would call home. A cleaner we see cleaning in the toilets of our own university, could be living in 5 x 5 room with a family of 7 and struggling to make ends meet. A child with a smile on their face at the playground could be a child that gets left behind while their parents are working. I learned to be kinder and I learned that even the smallest things can make a person's day better.

Personal Statement: Nur Aainaa binti Rozliman

We enrich our lives by enriching others, by sharing knowledge; we also gain some in return. There are endless ways to give back to society and it may all start at our own back alley.

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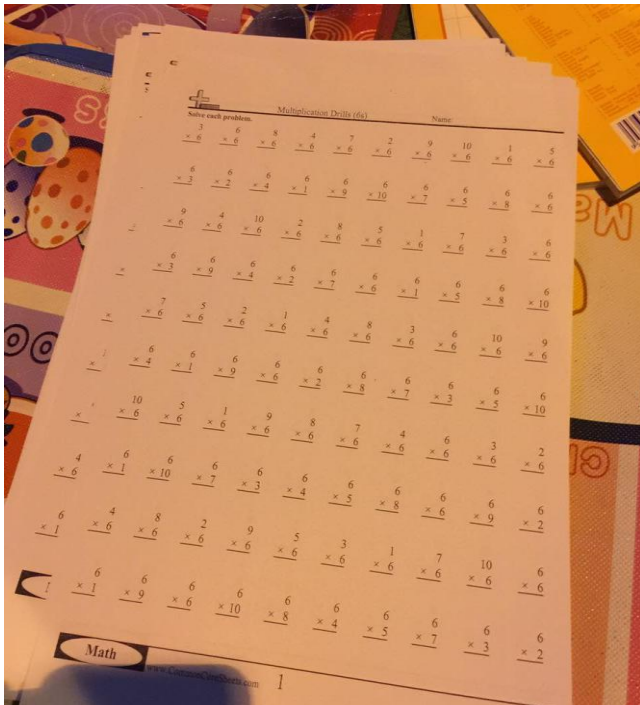


Figure 1 Worksheets for the Students



Figure 2 Our Classes Start at 8pm to 11pm

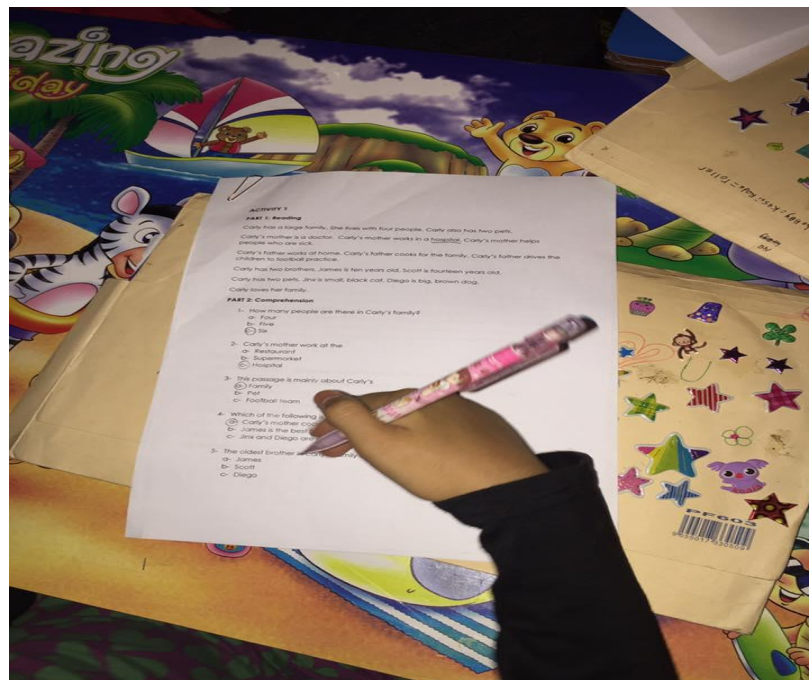


Figure 1 A student's English Worksheet Module (Beta Version)